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GUZ 61 2Peter

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - LXI*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
61 2Peter
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Greeting

2Pe 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those equally precious with us, having obtained faith in the righteousness of our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ:

2Pe 1:2 Grace to you, and peace be multiplied by a full knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

Confirm Your Calling and Election

2Pe 1:3 As His divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through the full knowledge of the One calling us through glory and virtue,

2Pe 1:4 by which means He has given to us the very great and precious promises, so that through these you might be partakers of the divine nature, escaping from the corruption in the world by lust.

2Pe 1:5 But also in this very thing, bringing in all diligence, filling in your faith with virtue; and virtue with knowledge;

2Pe 1:6 and knowledge with self-control; and self-control with patience; and patience with godliness;

2Pe 1:7 and godliness with brotherly love; and brotherly love with love.

2Pe 1:8 For these things being in you, and abounding, they will make you not idle, not unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2Pe 1:9 For the one in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, taking on forgetfulness of the cleansing of his sins in time past.

2Pe 1:10 On account of this, brothers, rather be diligent to make sure of your calling and election; for doing these things, you will not ever fall into sin .

2Pe 1:11 For so will be richly furnished to you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2Pe 1:12 For this reason I will not neglect to cause you to remember always concerning these things, though you know and have been confirmed in the present truth.

2Pe 1:13 But I deem it right, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by a reminder,

2Pe 1:14 knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

2Pe 1:15 And I will also be diligent to cause you always to have memory of these things after my departure.

Christ's Glory and the Prophetic Word

2Pe 1:16 For not following fables which had been cleverly devised, but having become eyewitnesses of the majesty of Jesus Christ, we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord.

2Pe 1:17 For receiving honor and glory from God the Father such a voice being borne to Him from the magnificent glory, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I was well pleased," Psa. 2:7; Gen. 22:2; Isa. 42:1; Matt. 17:5

2Pe 1:18 even we heard this voice being borne out of Heaven, being with Him in the holy mountain,

2Pe 1:19 and we have the more established prophetic word, in which you do well to take heed, as to a lamp shining in a murky place, until day dawns and the Day-star rises in your hearts;

2Pe 1:20 knowing this first, that every prophecy of Scripture did not come into being of its own interpretation;

2Pe 1:21 for prophecy was not at any time borne by the will of man, but having been borne along by the Holy Spirit, holy men of God spoke.

2 Peter 1:1-21

2 Peter 1 - The Sure Christian Life

A. An encouragement to know God and what He has done for us.

1. (1) *Introducing a letter from Peter, to believers.*

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

a. **Simon Peter:** The Apostle here called himself **Simon Peter**. Perhaps, since he wrote this letter later in life, he didn't want to forget where he came from and that sometimes he was still more like the old **Simon** than the new **Peter**.

i. We remember that **Simon** was his given name at birth; **Peter** was the special name given to him by Jesus, to call this man to "rock-like" thinking and behavior.

ii. Some have said that Peter didn't write this letter because the subject and style is somewhat different than 1 Peter. Yet the *purpose* of the two letters is quite different. 1 Peter was written to encourage Christians under the threat of violent persecution; 2 Peter was written to warn those same believers of the danger of false teachers and harmful influences.

iii. "Convinced that the **best antidote for heresy** is a **mature knowledge** of the truth, Peter exhorts his readers to have a proper appreciation for prophecy,

to live holy and godly lives while awaiting Christ's coming and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord." (Kirby)

b. **A bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ:** The order of these titles is important. Peter considered himself *first* a **bondservant**, and *then* an **apostle**. His standing as a **bondservant** was more important to him than his status as an **apostle**.

c. **To those who have obtained like precious faith:** Peter wrote to those who had the same salvation he had experienced, which he called "a **like precious faith**." This faith was **obtained**, and not by the efforts of man but **by the righteousness of our God**.

i. "He tells us too, that faith is 'precious;' and is it not precious? For it deals with precious things, with precious promises, with precious blood, with a precious redemption, with all the preciousness of the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (Spurgeon)

ii. **Like precious faith** probably speaks to the fact that the Jews and Gentiles enjoyed the same **faith**, and therefore the same benefits in Jesus. "God having given to *you* – believing *Gentiles*, the same faith and salvation which he had give to *us* – believing *Jews*." (Clarke)

d. **Our God and Savior Jesus Christ:** The grammar of the ancient Greek demonstrates that Peter said that **Jesus Christ is our God and Savior**. Peter clearly thought that Jesus was and is **our God and Savior**.

i. "The expression *God and our Saviour* is in a construction in the Greek text which demands that we translate, *our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ*, the

expression thus showing that Jesus Christ is the Christian's God." (Wuest)

ii. "The grammar leaves little doubt that in these words Peter is calling Jesus Christ both God and Savior." (Blum)

2. (2-4) *A greeting expanded into an understanding of the value of the knowledge of God.*

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

a. **Grace and peace be multiplied to you:** Peter indicated that **grace and peace** - those two most precious of gifts - are ours **in the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord**. As we know God we gain these essentials foundations for salvation and living.

b. **His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness:** However, not only grace and peace – but also **all things that pertain to life and godliness** are ours **through the knowledge of Him**. Knowing God is the key to **all things that pertain to life and godliness**.

i. These things come to us through **His divine power**. "Divine power! What stupendous issues are grasped in that term, divine power! It was this which digged the deep foundations of the earth and sea! Divine power, it is this which guides the marches of the stars of heaven! Divine power! it is this which

holds up the pillars of the universe, and which one day shall shake them, and hurry all things back to their native nothingness.” (Spurgeon)

ii. We are willing to try almost anything except **the knowledge of Him**. We will trust in the schemes and plans of men instead of **the knowledge of Him**. We will try knowing ourselves instead of **the knowledge of Him**. We need to come to the same place the Apostle Paul did, when he said *that I may know Him* (Php 3:10).

iii. According to Blum, the ancient Greek word **knowledge** doesn't refer to a casual acquaintance. It means an exact, complete, and thorough knowledge.

c. **Through the knowledge of Him:** We come to **knowledge of Him** as we learn of Him through His Word, through prayer, and through the community of God's people. It is true that we need God alone, but God does not meet us only in our solitude but also in the community of His people.

d. **Who called us:** This knowledge of God comes to those who are **called**. It is knowledge, but it is not mere intellectual understanding or intuition. It is the knowledge that comes by experience - the experience God's people have of God Himself.

e. **Who called us by glory and virtue:** It is Jesus' **glory and virtue** that motivated Him to call us, and it is His **glory and virtue** that draw us to Him.

f. **By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises:** This explains the value of the **glory and virtue** of God that calls us. By these He gave us **exceedingly great and precious promises**. This means that the promises of God are based upon His **glory and virtue**, and therefore

perfectly reliable because God can never compromise His **glory and virtue**.

i. Psa 138:2 reminds us that God honors His word even above His name. We never have to doubt any promise of God. Instead we should *let God be true but every man a liar* (Rom 3:4).

ii. For these reasons, God's promises are both **exceedingly great** (in the sense of being large and imposing), and they are **precious**, in the sense of being valuable. "Many things are great which are not precious, such as great rocks, which are of little value; on the other hand, many things are precious which are not great-such as diamonds and other jewels, which cannot be very great if they be very precious. But here we have promises which are so great, that they are not less than infinite, and so precious, that they are not less than divine." (Spurgeon)

iii. "It was of considerable consequence to the comfort of the Gentiles that these promises were made to *them*, and that salvation was not exclusively of the Jews." (Clarke)

g. **That through these you may be partakers of the divine nature:** This explains the value of these **great and precious promises**. Through these **promises**, we are **partakers of the divine nature**. Peter's idea is similar to Paul's idea of our glorious status as adopted sons and daughters of God (Gal 4:5-7).

i. This is a remarkably generous and loving of God. He could rescue us from hell without even inviting us to be **partakers of the divine nature**. It shows how deeply God loves us and wants to share His life – indeed, even **the divine nature** – with His people.

h. **Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust:** God is above and beyond the **corruption** of this world. It should also be that way with those who are the **partakers of the divine nature**. The **corruption that is in the world** expresses itself **through lust** - the ungodly desires of this world.

3. (5-7) *How to live as a partaker of the nature.*

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

a. **Giving all diligence:** We are *partakers of the divine nature*, but once we are made spiritual sons and daughters, growth in the Christian life doesn't just happen to us. We are supposed to give **all diligence** to our walk with the Lord.

b. **Add to your faith virtue:** We begin our life with God with **faith**, but faith progresses into **virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness**, and **love** - love being the capstone of all God's work in us.

i. **Add to your faith:** Literally in the ancient Greek, "*Lead up hand in hand*; alluding, as most think, to the *chorus* in the Grecian dance, who danced with joined hands." (Clarke)

ii. The scope of the list demonstrates that God wants us to have a well-rounded Christian life, complete in every fashion. We can't be content with an incomplete Christian life.

iii. Of the word **self-control**, the Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest says the Greeks used this word **self-**

control to describe someone who was not ruled by the desire for sex.

c. **Giving all diligence:** These beautiful qualities are not things that the Lord simply pours into us as we passively receive. Instead, we are called to give **all diligence** to these things, working in partnership with God to **add** them.

4. (8-9) *How to use these qualities to measure our Christian walk.*

For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

a. **If these things are yours and abound:** If we have these things, and **abound** in these things, it is evident to everyone that we are not **barren nor unfruitful** in our **knowledge** of Jesus.

i. The words **barren** and **unfruitful** characterize the lives of many Christians, who lack these qualities because they lack in their knowledge of God, that is, knowing Him relationally in an increasingly fuller and deeper sense.

ii. **Abound:** Some may feel good that these qualities are seen in us from time to time. But Peter says they should

abound in us.

b. **He who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness:** If we lack these things, it shows we have "eye trouble." We are **shortsighted**, unable to see God, only ourselves. This makes us virtually blind, showing we have **forgotten** that we were **cleansed from his old sins**.

i. "Such a man sees the things of time, and fails to discern those of eternity ... he sees himself and his fellowmen, but not God. This nearsightedness is destructive of a true Christian experience, and therefore makes advance impossible." (Morgan)

ii. The *reason* for this condition is also stated; such a one **has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins**. "That is to say, he has failed to respond to all the enlargement of life and vision which came to him when he received the cleansing of his nature at the very beginning of his Christian life." (Morgan)

iii. Perhaps this one **has forgotten** how bad he was, and *how much he needed* this cleansing. Perhaps this one **has forgotten** the *great cost* of this purging of sin's dirty stain. Perhaps this one **has forgotten** how *great and complete* the cleansing is, making a once guilty sinner now as pure and as white as snow (Isa 1:18).

5. (10-11) *Making our call and election sure.*

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

a. **Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure:** This shows how we can be sure that God called us, and that we are His elect. It is by doing **these things** spoken of in 2Pe 1:5-7 (*faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love*). As we see these things in our life, we know that our lives are becoming more like the nature of Jesus. It shows that we are being *conformed to the image of His Son* (Rom 8:29).

i. It is possible for an unsaved person to do many moral and religious duties. But the **“these things”** Peter wrote of are matters of the heart, and should be evident in anyone *born again*. Simply said, if we are called, if we are elect, then we are born again - and if we are born again, it shows in the way that we live.

ii. “It will be asked however, why is *calling* here put before *election* seeing election is eternal, and calling takes place in time? I reply, because calling is first to us. The first thing which you and I can know is our calling: we cannot tell whether we are elect until we feel that we are called. We must, first of all, prove our calling, and then our election is sure most certainly.” (Spurgeon)

b. **For if you do these things you will never stumble:** In pursuing these things we keep from stumbling. Continual growth and progress in the Christian life is the sure way to keep from stumbling.

c. **Entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:** Peter here reminded his readers of the great reward of a **calling and election** made **sure**. They would enter heaven gloriously, not *as through fire* (1Co 3:15).

i. “There are two ways of entering a port. A ship may come in, waterlogged and crazy, just keep afloat by continual working at the pumps; or it may enter with every sail set, her pennon floating at the mast-head. The latter is what the apostle desires for himself and those who addresses. He desired that an entrance abundant should be ministered unto them.” (Meyer)

ii. F.B. Meyer also wrote that the idea of an “abundant entrance” was really a *choral entrance*.

The idea was of a Roman conqueror coming into his city, welcomed by singers and musicians who would join him in a glorious, happy procession into the city.

iii. "Will your entrance into heaven be like that? Will you enter it, save so as by fire, or to receive a reward? Will you come unrecognized and unknown, or be welcomed by scores and hundreds to whom you have been the means of blessing, and who will wait you?" (Meyer)

B. The need to be reminded.

1. (12) *Peter explains why he writes about things they have heard before - the basics of Christian living.*

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

a. **For this reason:** Peter just wrote about the promise of *entrance into the everlasting kingdom* of God (2Pe 1:11). Because coming to that kingdom is so important, it is helpful and necessary for Peter **to remind you always** of the basics of the Christian life.

b. **I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know:** Even though his readers did **know** the truth, in light of what was at stake - their eternal destiny - it was worth it to go over these ideas again and again.

i. A sports team going for the championship will practice the same fundamentals over and over again. They do this, even though they know the techniques, because they want the victory.

ii. For this reason, Christians should never get tired hearing the basics of the Christian life. We should rejoice every time Jesus Christ and His gospel and plan for our lives is preached.

c. **Established in the present truth:** **Established** is the same word translated *strengthen* in Luk 22:32, when Jesus told Peter “*when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.*” Here, Peter fulfilled that command of Jesus. He would establish and strengthen us by reminding us of the basics of the Christian life.

2. (13-14) *The urgency in Peter’s heart.*

Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

a. **I think it is right:** Because of what is at stake, Peter knew it was **right** to remind people constantly, especially because he knew that the days of his earthly life were soon coming to an end.

b. **Shortly I must put off my tent:** Peter considered his body no more than a **tent**. A **tent** is a temporary place to live. Tents should be taken care of, but you wouldn’t invest large resources into fixing up a tent. You save your real resources for a more permanent place to live. Our more permanent place to live is heaven, and we should invest more in heaven than in our **tent** – our physical body.

i. How did Peter know that **shortly I must put off my tent**? Perhaps it was because Peter was simply getting old. Perhaps it was because the flames of persecution were getting hotter around him. Church history tells us that Peter *did* die a martyr, **just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed** him (Joh 21:18-19).

ii. This shows that Peter believed that the prophetic words of Jesus were to be fulfilled literally. Jesus **showed** Peter that he would die a martyr, and he

believed it - even if he might have *wished* it were only symbolic.

3. (15) Peter prepares for the future.

Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

a. **I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder:** Peter put this reminder in a letter, so the people of God would have a constant reminder even after his departure.

b. **After my decease:** Peter seemed aware of the significance of the passing of the apostles and the need to preserve the authoritative teaching of the apostles and prophets. This, the written teaching of the apostles and their associates, is the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20) preserved by God for all generations.

C. The sureness of apostolic testimony.

1. (16-18) The evidence of the transfiguration.

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

a. **We did not follow cunningly devised fables:** Peter solemnly declared that the testimony of the apostles - *testimony they endured torture and gave their lives for* - was not based on clever fables or even half truths, but on eyewitness testimony; that they **were eyewitnesses of His majesty.**

i. **Fables** translates the ancient Greek word *mythos*. Some people think the Gospel and the Biblical record are just ancient myths. They may admire their power as myths, but Peter rightly insisted that his message was no myth. It was history, seen by **eyewitnesses**.

ii. We can reliably reconstruct historical events from the testimony of **eyewitnesses**, who must be checked for truthfulness. The apostles and writers of the New Testament have been checked for centuries and have been found truthful.

b. **Eyewitnesses of His majesty**: When did Peter eyewitness the **majesty** of Jesus? There were many occasions, but one probably stuck out in his mind: the transfiguration of Jesus, recorded in Mat 17:1-8, Mar 9:1-9, and Luk 9:28-36. We know this because Peter quoted here what God the Father said to Jesus at the Transfiguration: **"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

i. At the transfiguration, Jesus was *transformed* in glory before the apostles, not merely changed in outward appearance. The effect was extremely striking; Jesus became so bright in appearance that it was hard to look at Jesus. He shined *like the sun* (Mat 17:2).

ii. One may say that this shining glory was not a *new* miracle, but a pause in an ongoing miracle. The real miracle was that Jesus, most of the time, could *keep from* displaying His glory.

c. **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**: At the transfiguration the Father spoke from heaven to declare His approval of and joy in God the Son. As Peter wrote this, we sense the words were still ringing in his ears because at the transfiguration he

made the mistake of making Jesus equal with Moses and Elijah, who appeared along with Him.

i. Those words from heaven were important because Jesus had just told His disciples that He would have to be crucified and His followers would also have to take up their cross to follow Him (

Mar 8:31-38). His disciples needed this word of assurance to keep their confidence in Jesus and needed to hear that Jesus was still well pleasing to the Father, even though He said He would be crucified.

ii. The words from heaven also clearly put Jesus above the Law and the Prophets. Jesus was not merely another or even a better lawgiver or prophet. Jesus was and is the **beloved Son**.

iii. Essentially, the **voice** from heaven was a rebuke to Peter (Mar 9:7). Yet what was once a rebuke became a sweet memory.

iv. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus because they represented those caught up to God (Jud 1:9 and 2Ki 2:11). They represented the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Moses and Elijah also are connected with prophecy, having a strong connection to the witnesses of Rev 11:3-13.

d. **And we heard this voice which came from heaven:** It was awesome for Peter and the disciples to see the transfigured, glorified Jesus. It was awesome for them to hear **this voice ... from heaven**. Yet the experience itself did not transform their lives. Only being born again by the Spirit of God did that, giving them boldness beyond measure. The transfiguration was awesome, but it was a passing experience until they were born again.

2. (19) *The evidence of fulfilled prophecy.*

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

a. **And so we have the prophetic word confirmed:**

Peter's experience at the transfiguration was amazing. But the testimony of God's word about Jesus was even more sure than Peter's personal experience. The fulfillment of **the prophetic word confirmed** is a certain, reliable testimony of the truth of the Scriptures.

i. "Taken according to the common translation, it seems to say that *prophecy* is a surer evidence of Divine revelation than *miracles*; and so it has been understood." (Clarke)

b. **Which you do well to heed:** When we consider the prophetic testimony to Jesus, we **do well to heed** it. There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly. The combination of this evidence together, from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming.

i. Professor Peter Stoner has calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power). That number of silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Stoner says that if you consider 48 of the prophecies, the odds become one in 10 to the 157th power.

c. **As a light that shines in a dark place:** No wonder Peter could say that the prophetic word is **confirmed**, and that it is as a **light that shines in a dark place**, something we should cling to **until the day dawns** and Jesus returns.

3. (20-21) *Principles for prophetic assurance.*

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

a. **No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation:** Even in Peter's day enemies of Jesus twisted Old Testament prophecies, giving them personal and bizarre meanings attempting to exclude Jesus from their fulfillment. But Peter says that prophecy is not **of any private interpretation**; its meaning is evident and can be confirmed by others.

i. Though Peter here spoke of **prophecy of Scripture**, the same principle is true for the gift of prophecy today. There must be sober *confirmation* of any prophetic word, and that not through another prophetic word but through the Scriptures. In the gift of prophecy, God never speaks to *only* one person, and always provides confirmation.

b. **Prophecy never came by the will of man:** It is wrong and invalid to twist prophecy to our own personal meaning, because prophecy does not come from man but from God. It does come through **holy men of God**- but only as they are **moved by the Holy Spirit**.

i. "Far from *inventing* the subject of their own predictions, the ancient prophets did not even *know* the meaning of what they themselves wrote. They were *carried beyond themselves* by the influence of the *Divine Spirit*, and after ages were alone to discover the object of the prophecy; and the fulfillment was to be the absolute proof that the prediction was of God and that it was of no *private invention*." (Clarke)

c. **As they were moved by the Holy Spirit:** According to Green, the ancient Greek word translated “**moved**” has the sense of *carried along*, as a ship being carried along by the wind or the current (the same word is used of a ship in Act 27:15; Act 27:17). It is as if the writers of Scripture “raised their sails” in cooperation with God and the Holy Spirit carried them along in the direction He wished.

False Prophets and Teachers

2Pe 2:1 But false prophets were also among the people, as also false teachers will be among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, and denying the Master who has bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves.

2Pe 2:2 And many will follow their destructive ways, by whom the way of truth will be evil spoken of.

2Pe 2:3 And by covetousness, with well-turned words, they will use you for gain, for whom judgment of old does not linger, and their destruction does not slumber.

2Pe 2:4 For if God did not spare sinning angels, but delivered them to chains of darkness, thrust down into Tartarus, having been kept to judgment;

2Pe 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah the eighth, a herald of righteousness, bringing a flood on a world of ungodly ones;

2Pe 2:6 and covering the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with ashes, He condemned them with an overthrow, setting an example to men intending to live ungodly.

2Pe 2:7 And He delivered righteous Lot, who had been oppressed by the behavior of the lawless in lustfulness.

2Pe 2:8 For that righteous one living among them day after day, in seeing and in hearing, his righteous soul was tormented with their lawless deeds.

2Pe 2:9 But the Lord knows to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unjust for a day of judgment, being punished,

2Pe 2:10 and most of all those going after flesh in the lust of defilement, and despising rulership, darers, self-pleasing; they do not tremble at glories, speaking evil;

2Pe 2:11 where angels being greater in strength and power do not bring against them a reproaching charge before the Lord.

2Pe 2:12 But these as unreasoning natural beasts, having been born for capture and corruption, speaking evil in that of which they are ignorant, they shall utterly perish in their corruption,

2Pe 2:13 being about to receive the wages of unrighteousness, having deemed indulgence in the day to be pleasure; spots and blemishes reveling in their deceits, feasting along with you,

2Pe 2:14 having eyes full of an adulteress, and never ceasing from sin; alluring unsettled souls; having a heart busied with covetousness; cursed children;

2Pe 2:15 forsaking a straight path, they went astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness,

2Pe 2:16 but had reproof of his own transgression, the dumb ass speaking in a man's voice held back the madness of the prophet.

2Pe 2:17 These are springs without water, clouds being driven by tempest, for whom the blackness of darkness is kept forever.

2Pe 2:18 For speaking great swelling words of vanity, by the lusts of the flesh, by unbridled lusts, they allure those indeed escaping the ones living in error,

2Pe 2:19 promising them freedom, though themselves being slaves of corruption; for by whom anyone has been

overcome, even to this one he has been enslaved.

2Pe 2:20 For if by a full knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, they have escaped the defilements of the world, and again being entangled they have been overcome by these, then their last things have become worse than the first.

2Pe 2:21 For it was better for them not to have fully known the way of righteousness, than fully knowing to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

2Pe 2:22 But the word of the true proverb has happened to them: "The dog turning to his own vomit;" also, the washed sow to wallowing in mud. Prov. 26:11

2 Peter 2:1-22

2 Peter 2 - The Rise and Fall of False Teachers

A. Facts about false teachers.

1. (1) *The presence and work of false teachers.*

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

a. **But there were also false prophets:** Even as there were *holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2Pe 1:21)*, so also there were **false prophets** and **false teachers** then and today. Peter stated this as a fact and not as a possibility; and he said they were **among you**, not only on the outside of the church.

i. "There were not only holy men of God among the Jews, who prophesied by divine inspiration, but there

were also false prophets, whose prophecies were from their own imagination, and perverted many.” (Clarke)

b. Who will secretly bring in destructive heresies:

False teachers work **secretly**. It isn't that their teaching is secret, but the deceptive nature of their teaching is hidden. No false teacher ever announces himself as a false teacher.

c. Destructive heresies: False teachers bring in **destructive heresies** that destroy by telling lies about Jesus Christ and His work for us and in us. By these **heresies** people are hurt and destroyed. Heresy isn't harmless.

d. Even denying the Lord who bought them: False teachers deny the **Lord who bought them**. In this Peter says that at the very least, they *appear* to be saved. Otherwise Peter would never say that the Lord **bought them**. At the same time, they are false, destructive teachers.

i. Even a person who has what appears to be a godly walk and relationship with Jesus Christ can still bring in destructive heresies. Often times good men who teach lies do the worst damage. Their lies are accepted far more easily because of the good character of these men.

e. Bring on themselves swift destruction: False teachers are promised **swift destruction**, even though they aren't judged fast enough in the opinion of many.

2. (2) The popularity of false teachers.

And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

a. Many will follow their destructive ways: This reminds us that false teachers may be popular. Just because something succeeds in attracting a crowd of

followers, it doesn't mean that it is of God. We know that God's work will always bear fruit, but the devil's work can also increase.

i. The most distressing aspect of the work of false teachers is not that they are *among you* (2Pe 2:1). False teachers always have been and always will be among Christians. The most distressing fact is that so many Christians **will follow their destructive ways**.

b. **Because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed**: When false teachers are at work and when crowds are following them, the **way of truth** is **blasphemed**. God's holy name and honor are disgraced.

3. (3) *The strategy and destiny of false teachers.*

By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

a. **By covetousness**: False teachers use **covetousness** - both their own and in their followers. Many false teachers, both today and in previous times, present a gospel that has self-gratification at its core. All this is presented **with deceptive words** because false teaching never announces itself.

b. **Their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber**: Peter assured us that false teachers *will be* judged. Even though it seems they prosper, their judgment is not **idle**. God's wrath pours out on them even in allowing them to continue, thus heaping up more and more condemnation and hardness of heart in themselves.

B. God knows how to take care of both the righteous and the ungodly.

1. (4-6) *The ungodly will be judged.*

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;

a. **If God did not spare the angels who sinned:** God judged these wicked angels, setting them in **chains of darkness**. Apparently some fallen angels are in bondage while others are unbound and active in the earth as demons.

i. The sin of angels can be thought of in two main ways: in the original rebellion of some angels against God, and in the sin of the "sons of God" described in Gen 6:1-2.

ii. It is clear that at some time, angelic beings had a period of choosing and testing when their future destiny would be determined. "How long that probation was to last to them, and what was the particular *test* of their fidelity, we know not; nor indeed do we know what was their *sin*; nor *when* nor *how* they fell. Jude says *they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*; which seems to indicate that they got *discontented* with their lot, and aspired to higher honours, or perhaps to celestial domination." (Clarke)

iii. It may be that the sin of Satan and his angels (Rev 12:4; Rev 12:7) was occasioned by the plan of God for mankind.

- Man is made in the image of God (Gen 1:26) and angels are not. Satan and his angels resented this

plan to create a being that would be more closely connected to God than they were.

- Though mankind is beneath the angels in dignity (Heb 2:6-7 a, 2Pe 2:11), it is the job of angels to serve mankind (Heb 1:14; Heb 2:7-8, Psa 91:11-12). Satan and his angels resented a plan that would command them to serve lesser beings.

- Redeemed mankind will be lifted in honor and status above all angelic beings (1Co 6:3; 1Jn 3:2). Satan and his angels resented a plan that would glorify these lower beings to places above them.

iv. "It sprang from the admiration of their own gifts, it was confirmed by pride and ambition, it was perfected by envy, stirred by the decree of exalting man's nature above angels in and by Christ." (Trapp)

v. At the same time, we cannot conclusively say we know *why* the angels sinned because the Scriptures do not give us more than hints.

b. Cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness: By not keeping their proper place, they are now kept in **chains of darkness**. Their sinful pursuit of freedom put them in bondage.

i. Those who insist on freedom to do whatever they want are like these angels: so "free" that they are bound with **chains of darkness** (a powerful poetic description of their miserable bondage). True freedom comes from obedience.

ii. **Cast them down to hell:** The ancient Greek word translated **hell** is literally *Tartarus*. In Greek mythology, Tartarus was the lowest hell, a place of punishment for rebellious gods. Peter borrowed this word to speak of the place of punishment for **the angels who sinned**.

iii. Angels have a high office and a high service of God; yet it was still possible for them to fall. We should take warning from this. As well, we can understand that in some ways we can sin worse than these angels did. "I answer that the devil never yet rejected free grace and dying love; the devil never yet struggled against the Holy Spirit in his own conscience; the devil never yet refused the mercy of God. These supreme pinnacles of wickedness are only reached by you who are hearers of the gospel, and yet cast its precious message behind your backs." (Spurgeon)

c. **And did not spare the ancient world:** God judged **the ancient world**, the world before Noah's Flood, because *the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Gen 6:5).

d. **And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction:** God judged the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, making them an example of His judgment, *because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave* (Gen 18:20).

e. **Making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly:** These three examples of judgment show us the important principle that Peter wants to highlight.

- God judged **the angels who sinned**, so *no one is too high to be judged*.
- God judged **the ancient world** before the flood, so *God doesn't grade on a curve*, only comparing man among other men.

- God judged **Sodom and Gomorrah**, so even the prosperous can be judged.

i. Therefore the **ungodly** have no reason to think they can escape God's judgment. Their coming judgment is certain. As Jesus said in Luk 10:10-12, for those who reject the truth "*it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom.*"

2. (7-9) *The righteous will be delivered.*

And delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

a. **And delivered righteous Lot:** Peter already told us how the Lord delivered Noah (2Pe 2:5). Now, he shows us that the Lord **delivered righteous Lot**.

i. "The preservation and deliverance of Lot gave the apostle occasion to remark, that God knew as well to *save* as to *destroy*; and that his *goodness* led him as forcibly to save righteous Lot, as his *justice* did to destroy the rebellious in the instances already adduced." (Clarke)

b. **And delivered righteous Lot:** Lot was **righteous** in God's eyes, though perhaps it was hard for others to see his righteousness. Yet the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah **tormented his righteous soul from day to day**.

i. Lot's **soul** was **tormented**, but he failed to follow through with godly actions and separate himself and his family from the ungodliness of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord

delivered Lot because of his **righteous** soul; yet Lot lost everything else because of his too-close association with those wicked cities.

c. **Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations:** Even as the Lord delivered Lot, He knows how to deliver us from the **temptations** we face, and He knows how to **reserve the unjust** for the day of judgment. We can trust in God's deliverance of the godly because it is just as certain as His judgment of the ungodly.

i. **The Lord knows how:** We can take great confidence in this. Many times we do not know how, but **the Lord knows how**. This is a good principle for both life and doctrine. "For instance, sometimes we meet with perplexing doctrines; perhaps we endeavor to effect reconciliation between the predestination of God and the freedom of human action. It is better not to wade too far into those deep waters, lest we lose ourselves in an abyss. 'The Lord knoweth.'" (Spurgeon)

ii. The **unjust** have reservation made for them: they are reserved **for the day of judgment**. But believers have no such reservation. God will deliver us from the very day of judgment, from the very time of wrath that He pours out on the earth (Rev 3:10).

iii. "According to the Revised Version, and I think that translation is correct, the punishment has begun already. The Lord knows how to go on even now punishing the ungodly." (Spurgeon)

iv. "Peter (if any man) might well say, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver his;' for he had been strangely delivered, Acts 12." (Trapp) In Acts 12, God wonderfully delivered Peter from prison and He

painfully delivered Herod to judgment. God knows how to do both.

C. A description of the ungodly among them.

1. (10-11) They are fleshly and proud.

And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

a. **And especially those who walk according to the flesh:** These ungodly ones are *especially* reserved for judgment. They live according to the flesh, not the spirit, and are marked by **uncleanness**.

b. **They are presumptuous, self-willed:** These ungodly ones are proud, despising authority. In their presumption they will even speak ill of spiritual powers (Satan and his demons) that the angels themselves do not speak evil of, but the angels rebuke them in the name of the Lord instead.

i. Much of what goes on under the name of spiritual warfare shows this kind of pride and presumption. While we recognize our authority in Jesus, we see that it is only in Jesus that we have it - and we leave the **reviling accusations** to Him alone.

c. **Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation:** Here Peter contrasted the behavior of **those who walk according to the flesh** with **angels**, that is, faithful angels. The faithful angels did not slander or exaggerate in what they said or how they represented the sins of others; these who walked according to the flesh did.

2. (12-13a) Their spiritual doom is sealed.

But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime.

a. **Like natural brute beasts:** Since they function in the flesh, not the spirit, they are like animals. They are fit only for destruction (**made to be caught and destroyed**) and they are ignorant.

b. **And will receive the wages of unrighteousness:** The ungodly will be “paid” for their evil - and their fleshly lives will be paid the **wages of unrighteousness**.

i. “What these evil men, who were troubling Peter’s people, were doing, was to say that they loved and served Christ, while the things they taught and did were a complete denial of him.” (Barclay)

3. (13b-17) A list of the sins of the false teachers.

They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

a. **Carousing in their own deceptions:** These ungodly false teachers are a dangerous and corrupting presence

in the body of Christ, not only deceiving others but deceiving themselves also.

i. "The word here rendered riot [**carousing**], comes of a root that signifies to break, for there is nothing that doth so break and emasculate the minds of men as rioting and reveling; luxury draws out a man's spirits, and dissolves him." (Trapp)

b. **Having eyes full of adultery:** Their heart is set on the flesh, and their **eyes** on **adultery**, both spiritual and sexual. They prey on the unstable to join them in their ways (**enticing unstable souls**).

i. Literally, Peter wrote that *their eyes are full of an adulterous woman*. "They lust after every girl they see; they view every female as a potential adulteress." (Green)

c. **They have a heart trained in covetous practices:** They are equipped, but not for ministry, only for selfish gain - they are truly **accursed**. We all train our hearts in something, either training them in covetousness and lust, or in godliness.

i. "The metaphor is taken from the *agonistae* in the Grecian games, who exercised themselves in those feats, such as *wrestling, boxing, running, etc.*, in which they proposed to contend in the public games. These persons had their hearts schooled in nefarious practices; they had *exercised themselves* until they were perfectly *expert* in all the arts of seduction, overreaching, and every kind of fraud." (Clarke)

d. **Following the way of Balaam:** They are like Balaam, who was guilty of the greatest of sins – leading others into sin, and that for the sake of his own gain. Balaam had to be restrained by a **dumb donkey** because he would not listen to God.

e. **These are wells without water:** These ungodly false teachers are empty – as useless as **wells without water** – and like clouds that bring only darkness, and no nourishing rain.

4. (18-19) *The allure of the false teachers.*

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

a. **They speak great swelling words of emptiness:** The message of the ungodly false teachers is empty of real spiritual content, though it is swollen big with words. Their allure is to the **lusts of the flesh** in their audience, just as the crowds who wanted bread from Jesus, but didn't want Jesus Himself (Joh 6:25-27; Joh 6:47-66).

b. **While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves:** They promise freedom, but freedom can never be found in the flesh, only in God's Spirit. Freedom isn't found in what Jesus can *give* us, but only in Jesus Himself. When we seek freedom in the wrong way, we become **slaves of corruption** (decay and death).

c. **By him also he is brought into bondage:** In being overcome by the flesh and the false teachers, these unfortunates became slaves to both.

5. (20-22) *The danger of falling away and following after false teachers*

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

a. The latter end is worse for them than the beginning: It is better for a person to have never known a thing about Jesus than to hear some truth, hold to it for a season, and then later reject it. Greater revelation has a greater accountability.

i. Their **end is worse ... than the beginning** because they have returned to **the pollutions of the world**. "These [**pollutions**] are called *miasmata*, things that *infect, pollute, and defile*... St. Augustine has improved on this image: 'The whole world,' says he, 'is one great diseased man, lying extended from east to west, and from north to south; and to heal this great sick man, the almighty Physician descended from heaven.'" (Clarke)

b. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness: Peter described a picture that certainly has the *appearance* of people losing their salvation.

- He speaks of those who **have escaped the pollutions of the world**.
- He speaks of those who did this **through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**.
- He speaks of those who at one time had **known the way of righteousness**.

i. Christians warmly debate the issue of whether or not it is possible for a true Christian to ever lose their status as a true Christian and fall away to damnation. Perhaps the best way of understanding the issue is to say that it is certainly true that those who *appear* saved – those who fit the description of Peter here – can end up in a place where **it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness.**

ii. Regarding these, those with a Reformed perspective will say that they were actually *never* saved; those with an Arminian perspective will say that they were actually saved and

lost their salvation. To bitterly divide along the lines of this debate – which focuses on things that are unknowable to outside observation – seems to fall into the category of being *obsessed with disputes and arguments over words*, as in 1Ti 6:4.

c. **A dog returns to his own vomit:** The nature as **dogs** is displayed by the way he returns to the **vomit** of the flesh and the world. He is like the *brute beasts* described in 2Pe 2:12, more animal than godly because he lives for the flesh.

i. “The dog which has got rid of the corruption inside it through vomiting it up cannot leave well enough alone; it goes sniffing around the vomit again.”
(Green)

The Day of the Lord Will Come

2Pe 3:1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle, in which by reminder I stir up your sincere mind to remember 2Pe 3:2 the words having been spoken before by the holy prophets, and the command of the Lord and Savior by us, the apostles;

2Pe 3:3 first, knowing this, that during the last days scoffers will come walking according to their own lusts,

2Pe 3:4 and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue this way from the beginning of creation.

2Pe 3:5 For this is hidden from them by their willing it so , that heavens were of old, and earth by water, and through water, being held together by the word of God,

2Pe 3:6 through which the world which then was, being flooded by water, perished.

2Pe 3:7 But the heavens and the earth now, having been stored up by the same word, are being kept for fire to a day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2Pe 3:8 But let not this one thing be hidden from you, beloved, that one day with the Lord is "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Psa. 90:4

2Pe 3:9 The Lord of the promise is not slow, as some deem slowness, but is long-suffering toward us, not having purposed any of us to perish, but all of us to come to repentance.

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with rushing sound, and having burned the elements will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be burned up.

2Pe 3:11 Then all these being about to be dissolved, what sort ought you to be in holy behavior and godliness,

2Pe 3:12 looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, through which the heavens having been set afire will be dissolved; and burning, the elements will melt?

2Pe 3:13 But according to His promise, we look for "new heavens and a new earth," in which righteousness dwells. Isa. 65:17

Final Words

2Pe 3:14 Because of this, beloved, looking for these things, be diligent, spotless, and without blemish, to be found in peace by Him.

2Pe 3:15 And think of the long-suffering of our Lord as salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him;

2Pe 3:16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unsettled pervert, as also they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2Pe 3:17 Then beloved, you knowing beforehand, watch lest being led away by the error of the lawless you fall from your own steadfastness.

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Peter 3:1-18

2 Peter 3 - Living Like a "Last Days Christian"

A. The certainty of the last days and God's promise.

1. (1-2) Another reference to the importance of being reminded

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

a. **I now write to you this second epistle:** Peter already wrote about the importance of being reminded (2Pe 1:12-13). But here he wanted to emphasize what

should be known in light of the coming of Jesus and the prophecies surrounding His coming.

i. "The purest minds need stirring up at times. It would be a great pity to stir up impure minds. That would only be to do mischief; but pure minds may be stirred as much as you please, and the more the better." (Spurgeon)

b. That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before: Peter knew the importance of *reminding* his readers of the Scriptural message, both received from the Old Testament (**spoken before**) and contemporary to his own day (**and of the commandment of us**).

i. Peter clearly believed that the **words** of Scripture were important; the **words** themselves, and not merely the *meaning* behind the words.

ii. "Peter believed in the inspiration of the very 'words' of Scripture; he was not one of those precious 'advanced thinkers' who would, if they could, tear the very soul out of the Book, and leave us nothing at all; but he wrote, 'That ye may be mindful of the words' — the very words — 'which were spoken before by the holy prophets.' 'Oh!' says one, 'but words do not signify; it is the inward sense that is really important.' Exactly so; that is just what the fool said about eggshells. He said that they did not signify; it was only the inward life-germ of the chick within that was important; so he broke all the shells, and thereby destroyed the life... If the words could be taken from us, the sense itself would be gone." (Spurgeon)

c. By the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior: By placing the messengers of the new covenant on the same level as the messengers of the old covenant, Peter

understood the authority of the New Testament, even as it was being formed.

i. Peter understood that Jesus gave His **apostles** the inspired authority to bring forth God's message to the new covenant community. He understood this from passages such as Mat 16:19, where Jesus gave the apostles authority to *bind* and *loose*, much as the authoritative rabbis of their day.

ii. "*Your apostles* does not merely mean 'your missionaries', the folk who evangelized you. When the New Testament writers mean merely 'church emissary' by *apostolos*, they say so, or the context makes it plain (Php 2:25). Peter is referring here to the 'apostles of Jesus Christ'. It is they and they alone who are put on a level with the Old Testament prophets." (Green)

iii. Significantly, Peter saw this authority invested in **the apostles**, not in him alone. He would think it strange for supposed papal authority to be credited to him.

2. (3-4) *The message of scoffers.*

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

a. **Knowing this first:** Christians should not be surprised to find that there are those who scoff at the idea of Jesus coming again. Peter told us that the **scoffers will come**. This is the **first** thing to know.

i. "Every time a blasphemer opens his mouth to deny the truth of revelation, he will help to confirm us in our conviction of the very truth which he denies. The

Holy Ghost told us, by the pen of Peter, that it would be so; and now we see how truly he wrote.” (Spurgeon)

b. **Will come in the last days:** In a sense, the **last days** began when Jesus ascended into heaven. Since that time, we haven’t rushed towards the precipice of the consummation of all things; but we have run along side that edge - ready to go anytime at God’s good pleasure.

i. “With the advent of Jesus the last chapter of human history had opened, though it was not yet completed.” (Green)

c. **Walking according to their own lusts:** These words remind us that scoffers do not only have an intellectual problem with God and His word. They also have a clear *moral* problem, wanting to reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives.

d. **Where is the promise of His coming?** This is the message of scoffers. In the thinking of these scoffers, Christians have talked about Jesus coming for two thousand years and He still hasn’t come back yet.

e. **All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation:** The **scoffers** base their message on the idea that things have always been the way they are right now, and that God has not and will not do anything new in His plan for creation.

i. “The argument of the false teachers is essentially a naturalistic one – a kind of uniformitarianism that rules out divine intervention in history.” (Blum)

3. (5-7) *The error of scoffers.*

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the

heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

a. **For this they willfully forget:** The scoffers presume upon the mercy and longsuffering of God, insisting that because they have never seen a widespread judgment of God, that there will never be one. But **they willfully forget** God's creation and the judgment God poured out on the earth in the days of Noah.

i. A literal belief in Creation, in Adam and Eve, and in Noah's Flood are essential for a true understanding of God's working both then and now. To deny these things undermines the very foundations of our faith. Sadly, today it is many Christians who **willfully forget** these things, thereby putting themselves in the place of scoffers.

b. **That by the word of God the heavens were of old:** The Bible clearly teaches that the active agent in creation was God's **word**. He spoke and creation came into being.

c. **The world that then existed perished, being flooded with water:** Peter's point is that things on this earth have not always continued the way they are now. The earth was different when God first created it and then it was different again after the flood. Therefore no one should scoff at God's promise that He will make it different once again, judging it not with water but with fire. The same **word of God** that created all matter and judged the world in the flood will one day bring a judgment of fire upon the earth.

i. "The lesson taught by the flood was this is a moral universe, that sin will not for ever go unpunished; and Jesus himself used the flood to point to this moral

(Mat 24:37-39). But these men chose to neglect it.”
(Green)

4. (8-10) *Truths that scoffers deny but God's people cling to.*

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

a. **That with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day:** What seems like forever for us is but a short time for God, just as an hour may seem to be an eternity for a child but a moment for an adult.

i. Peter quoted this idea from Psa 90:4 : *For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night.* “All time is as nothing before him, because in the *presence* as in the *nature* of God all is *eternity*; therefore nothing is *long*, nothing *short*, before him; no *lapse* of ages impairs his purposes.” (Clarke)

ii. “All things are equally near and present to his view; the distance of a thousand years before the occurrence of an event, is no more to him than would be the interval of a day. With God, indeed, there is neither past, present, nor future. He takes for his name the ‘I AM.’ ... He is the I AM; I AM in the present; I AM in the past and I AM in the future. Just as we say of God that he is everywhere, so we may

say of him that he is always; he is everywhere in space; he is everywhere in time." (Spurgeon)

iii. Peter did not give some prophetic formula, saying that a prophetic day somehow equals a thousand years. He instead communicated a general principle regarding how we see time and how God sees time. When people use this verse as a rigid prophetic key it opens the door for great error.

iv. "God sees time with a *perspective* we lack; even the delay of a thousand years may well seem like a day against the back-cloth of eternity. Furthermore, God sees time with an *intensity* we lack; one day with the Lord is like a thousand years." (Green)

b. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise:

The truth is that God *will* keep His promise, and without delay according to His timing. Any perceived delay from our perspective is due to the **longsuffering** of God, who allows man as much time as possible to repent.

i. Many of those who are Christians today are happy that Jesus didn't return ten years, or five years, or two years, or one year, or even two months ago. There is a compassionate purpose in God's timing.

c. Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance: Peter here revealed some of God's glorious heart. The reason why Jesus' return isn't sooner is so that **all should come to repentance**, because God is

not willing that any should perish.

i. We understand that God is **not willing that any should perish** not in the sense of a divine decree, as if God has *declared* that no sinners will perish. Rather, Peter's statement reflects God's heart of love for the

world (Joh 3:16), and His compassionate sorrow even in the righteous judgment of the wicked.

ii. It is the same thought as expressed in Eze 33:11 : *As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*

iii. "So wonderful is his love towards mankind, that he would have them all to be saved, and is of his own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost." (Calvin)

iv. "As God is *not willing that any should perish*, and as he is *willing that all should come to repentance*, consequently he has never devised nor decreed the damnation of any man, nor has he rendered it impossible for any soul to be saved." (Clarke)

d. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: Though the Lord's longsuffering love to the lost makes it seem that perhaps He delays His coming, the truth is that He will indeed come. And when Jesus does return, He will come at a time that will surprise many (**as a thief in the night**). The ultimate result of His coming will be a total transformation of this present world (**in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat**).

i. God *could* destroy the earth again as He did in the days of the flood. "There is still *water* enough to drown the earth, and there is *iniquity* enough to induce God to destroy it and its inhabitants." (Clarke) Yet God has promised to deal with this world with *fire*, not *flooding*.

B. Living in light of the last days and God's promise.

1. (11-13) *Holy and godly living in anticipation of a new created order.*

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

a. **Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be:** In light of the fact that this world order and the things associated with it will be dissolved, we should live our lives seeking first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness – that is, having holy conduct and godliness.

i. We tend to think that the world is more enduring and will last longer than *people*. This is not true, and Peter reminds us of it. *People* will live into eternity, longer than even the earth.

ii. **Will be dissolved:** “They will all be *separated*, all *decomposed*; but none of them *destroyed*.” (Clarke) “The solar system and the great galaxies, even space-time relationships, will be abolished ... All elements which make up the physical world will be dissolved by heat and utterly melt away. It is a picture which in an astonishing degree corresponds to what might actually happen according to modern theories of the physical universe.” (Bo Reicke, cited in Green)

iii. “This world, so far as we know, will not cease to be; it will pass through the purifying flame, and then it may be the soft and gentle breath of Almighty love will blow upon it and cool it rapidly, and the divine

hand will shape it as it cools into a paradise more fair." (Spurgeon)

iv. **What manner of persons ought you to be:**

"The king is coming; he is coming to his throne, and to his judgment. Now a man does not go up to a king's door, and there talk treason; and men do not sit in a king's audience-chamber when they expect him every moment to enter, and there speak ill of him. The King is on his way, and almost here; you are at his door; he is at yours. What manner of people ought ye to be? How can ye sin against One who is so close at hand?" (Spurgeon)

b. **Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God:** Peter says there is a sense in which we can *hasten* the Lord's coming. It's remarkable to think that we can actually *do* things that will affect the return of Jesus. In the immediate context, Peter says that we hasten the Lord's coming by our **holy conduct and godliness**.

i. We can also hasten the Lord's coming through *evangelism*. Paul said that God's prophetic focus on Israel will resume when the *fullness of the Gentiles has come in* (Rom 11:25).

ii. We can also hasten the Lord's coming through *prayer*. Even as Daniel asked for a speedy fulfillment of prophecy regarding captive Israel (Daniel 9), we can also pray "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" (Rev 22:20).

c. **Because of which the heavens will be dissolved:** Peter tells us that the very elements of this world order **will be dissolved**. God will genuinely make a **new heavens and a new earth**, even as Isaiah promised: *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and*

the former shall not be remembered or come to mind (Isa 65:17).

d. **A new earth in which righteousness dwells:** The most glorious characteristic of this new heaven and new earth is that it is a place **in which righteousness dwells**. In God's plan of the ages, this happens after the millennial earth ruled by Jesus Christ.

i. It is the re-creation of this world order as described in Rev 21:1 : *"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."*

2. (14-15a) *Keep diligent and do not despise the longsuffering of God.*

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—

a. **Looking forward to these things, be diligent:** If our hearts are really set on the glory of the new heaven and new earth, we will endeavor to walk godly in regard to our brothers and sisters (**in peace**) and in regard to God (**without spot and blameless**).

b. **The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation:** It is easy for Christians to sometimes resent the **longsuffering of God**; after all, it in some sense delays His coming. Yet, **the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation** for others, and it is salvation for us.

i. "We are puzzled at the longsuffering which causes so weary a delay. One of the reasons is that we have not much longsuffering ourselves. We think that we do well to be angry with the rebellious, and so we prove ourselves to be more like Jonah than Jesus. A few have learned to be patient and pitiful to the

ungodly, but many more are of the mind of James and John, who would have called fire from heaven upon those who rejected the Savior. We are in such a hurry.” (Spurgeon)

3. (15b-16) *A note regarding the letters of the Apostle Paul.*

—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

a. **As also our beloved brother Paul:** It is fashionable for some critics to say that the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul aren’t in agreement. These same critics also often say that Peter and Paul aren’t in agreement with Jesus. Yet here Peter affirmed Paul’s teaching in the warmest terms. He called Paul **beloved** and said that Paul wrote with **wisdom**.

i. This praise from Peter is even more wonderful when we remember that at one time Paul publicly rebuked Peter for public compromise (Gal 2:11-21).

b. **In which are some things hard to understand:** Though Peter praised Paul’s ministry, he admitted that some things in Paul’s writings were **hard to understand**, and those who were **untaught and unstable** could use some of the difficulties to their own ends, twisting Scripture.

c. **Twist ... the Scriptures:** Peter reminds us that the Scriptures *can be* twisted. Just because someone quotes the Bible doesn’t mean that they teach Biblical truth. It’s possible that they **twist ... the Scriptures**. That is why we should be like the Bereans, who “*searched the*

Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Act 17:11).

i. "It is worthy of remark that Paul's epistles are ranked among the *Scriptures*; a term applied to those writings which are divinely inspired, and to those only." (Clarke)

ii. "I may just add that the verb [**twist**], which the apostle uses here, signifies to *distort*, to *put to the rack*, to *torture*, to *overstretch*, and *dislocate the limbs*; and hence the persons here intended are those who proceed according to no fair plan of interpretation, but *force unnatural* and *sophistical meanings* on the word of God." (Clarke)

iii. **Destruction:** "Peter is very firm. The action of the false teachers in twisting Paul to justify their own libertinism and rejection of the parousia is so serious as to disqualify them from salvation." (Green)

4. (17-18) Conclusion.

You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

a. **Since you know this beforehand:** We, who know of the Day of the Lord and await it with patient expectation, must persevere lest we **fall from your own steadfastness**. We must take care to keep abiding in Jesus.

i. "In order that they might know how to stand, and to be preserved from falling, he gave them this direction: 'grow in grace;' for the way to stand is to

grow; the way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression.” (Spurgeon)

b. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: We prevent a **fall from your own steadfastness** by a continual growth in **grace and knowledge of Jesus**.

i. **Grace** is not merely the way God draws us to Him in the beginning. It is also the way we grow and stay in our **steadfastness**. We can never grow apart from **the grace and knowledge of our Lord**, and we never grow out of God’s grace.

ii. “But you will remark that our text does not say anything about grace growing; it does not say that grace grows. It tells us to ‘grow in grace.’ There is a vast difference between grace growing and our growing in grace. God’s grace never increases; it is always infinite, so it cannot be more; it is always everlasting; it is always bottomless; it is always shoreless. It cannot be more; and, in the nature of God, it could not be less. The text tells us to ‘grow in grace.’ We are in the sea of God’s grace; we cannot be in a deeper sea, but let us grow now we are in it.” (Spurgeon)

iii. We must also grow in our **knowledge** of Jesus Christ. This means knowing more *about* Jesus, but more importantly, *knowing Jesus* in a personal relationship.

c. To Him be the glory: When we are this ready and this steadfast in the **grace and knowledge of our Lord**, it gives God glory.

i. Spurgeon noted that this second letter of Peter ends on “two trumpet blasts.” One is from heaven to earth: **grow in the grace and knowledge of our**

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The other is from earth to heaven: **To Him be the glory both now and forever.**

ii. **Amen:** This final word is not included in all ancient manuscripts of 2 Peter, yet it is appropriate for a letter affirming the truth in the face of the danger of false prophets and scoffers. We can say there are four meanings to "Amen":

- It expresses the *desire of the heart*.
- It expresses the *affirmation of our faith*.
- It expresses the *joy of the heart*.
- It expresses the *declaration of resolution*.

iii. Under the law, **Amen** was only said at the declaration of the *curses* (Deu 27:14-26). Under the New Covenant, we say "Amen" at the announcement of a great blessing and praise to God.

Adam Clarke added this insightful postscript to Second Peter:

"We have now passed over all the canonical writings of Peter that are extant; and it is worthy of remark that, in no place of the two epistles already examined, nor in any of this apostle's sayings in any other parts of the sacred writings, do we find any of the *peculiar* tenets of the Romish Church: not one word of *his* or the *pope's supremacy*; not one word of those of affect to be his *successors*; nothing of the *infallibility* claimed by those pretended successors; nothing of *purgatory*, *penances*, *pilgrimages*, *auricular confession*, *power of the keys*, *indulgences*, *extreme unction*, *masses*, and *prayers for the dead*; and not one word on the most essential doctrine of the Romish Church, *transubstantiation*." (Clarke)